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SAVING THE WILD PLUM CROP

Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute

EXPERIMENT STATION

Tuskegee Institute, Alabama



By

G. W. CARVER, M. S. Agr.

THE TUSKEGEE EXPERIMENT STATION

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THE TUSKEGEE AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

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SAVING THE WILD PLUM CROP

By G. W. CARVER, M. S. Agr.,
Director

Nature endows or blesses each state or section with an indigenous flora and fauna best suited to that particular soil and climatic conditions.

Applying the above to Alabama, Macon and adjoining counties have been unusually blessed in the quantity, variety and quality of its wild plums. They vary in size from a half to one inch in diameter, and in flavor from sugary sweetness to sour and bitter. In color, from lemon yellow to crimson, scarlet and black, making possibilities for many pleasing combinations for the eye and palate.

I feel safe in saying that in Macon County alone there are many hundred bushels of plums that go to waste every year that there is a full crop, which is almost one year with another.

In a commercial way there is a great opportunity for jam and jelly factories.

No fruit improves with cultivation more satisfactorily than the wild plum, both the size and flavor is improved, and under cultivation some of the yellow and red types compare favorably in size with the Wild Goose and other cultivated varieties of that class.

No fruit makes more delicious jams, jellies, preserves, marmalades, etc., and it is the purpose of this bulletin to set forth in a practical way a number of recipes by which every housewife may be successful in the saving of this splendid article of food. (Note.)

NOTE:—Berry's Fruit Recipes have offered many valuable suggestions, and I hereby wish to gratefully acknowledge assistance.

CANNED PLUMS.

These may be used for puddings, pies, sauces, tarts, desserts, etc.

Select firm but well ripened fruit, prick the skin in several places to prevent bursting when cooked. Use pound for pound of sugar and fruit where an especially rich sauce is wanted, or eight quarts of plums and two quarts of sugar can be used. Add just water enough to melt the sugar, add a few of the plums at a time; cook until tender, and carefully remove the fruit and place in jars. Fill up with syrup and seal. Set in a dark place and away from draughts of air to prevent the jars from cracking.

PLUM JAM.

Select only nice well ripened fruit, take pound for pound of fruit and sugar, cover the fruit with boiling water; when nearly cold drain and add the sugar; cook slowly, stirring and skimming until it is thick enough for the juice to jelly when cold. Pack away in stone jars or glass vessels, store in a dark, cold place, examine from time to time and re-boil if inclined to sour.

PLUM MARMALADE.

Prepare the plums the same as for jam, to every pound of plums add one half of either apples or peaches, cook until thoroughly tender and mash, remove the seed if you wish, by passing through a colander or coarse sieve. Add one and one-half pounds of sugar to every two pounds of the fruit mixture; boil slowly and skim until it is thick like the jam; season to taste with ground cloves, cinnamon, allspice and just a suggestion of mace and nutmeg. Pack away the same as recommended for jam.

MARMALADE No. 2. (Delicious.)

Take fruit as follows: two pounds of plums, one-half pound of apples that have been peeled and cored; one-half pound of mulberries; one-fourth pound of the wild black cherries; one pound of peaches after peeling and "seeding"; one-half pound of blackberries. Wash, drain and add just water enough to keep from burning while cooking, boil until tender; remove the seed and add four and one-half pounds of sugar; boil slowly and skim thoroughly until thick, spice to taste, the same as number one, and pack away the same. This marmalade is excellent with turkey, chicken and all kinds of fresh meat.

PLUM PRESERVES.

I have had this method to give most excellent results.

Select good medium, but not over-ripe plums. After the plums have been peeled, which can be easily and quickly done by placing the fruit in boiling water for two or three minutes, and then into cold water, take a stone, porcelain or glass jar and place a layer of sugar and a layer of plums until as full as desired. Let stand over night, pour off the juice and let come to a boil, skim well, drop the fruit into this hot syrup; let it boil slowly until the fruit is clear. Now add to each quart of plums, fifteen grains of whole spice, ten cloves, three sticks of cinnamon an inch long and four shreds of mace. Seal and treat the same as for other fruit.

PLUM, PEACH AND APPLE PRESERVES.

Take one pound of plums, one pound of apples and one pound of peaches. All should be peeled and the apples and peaches cut into discs about the size of the plums. Sugar the fruit the same as for plum preserves but in separate jars. After standing over night, drain the syrup from each one into a preserving kettle and boil gently and skim thoroughly for two minutes, put the peaches in first, boil until tender, remove and add the apples, boiling them until tender, remove and add the plums, boiling them until clear. The apples and peaches should be kept hot; the plums should now be added and the whole mixed together but not mashed. Add spice exactly the same in kind and quantity as recommended for preserves.

PLUM CONSERVE.

Take three pounds of peeled plums, one pound of very ripe peaches that have been peeled and sliced. Select three large oranges, remove the seed and mince the pulp. Grate the rinds and use the pulp and juice. Put all

together and stir in three and one-half pounds of granulated sugar and one-half pound of strained honey; boil slowly until thick and seal hot.

PLUM JELLY.

Take as many medium ripe plums as you wish, cover them with boiling water. Pour off immediately, draining them thoroughly. Put them into a preserving kettle with just boiling water enough to cover them, boil until the plums begin to burst and considerable juice extracted. Pour off liquid and strain, for each pound of juice add one pound of white sugar. Return to the kettle and boil it slowly for twenty or thirty minutes, as it may require. Pour into jelly glasses and set aside to cool. When solid cover closely and store in a cold, dry place.

PICKLED PLUMS. No. I.

Take either the yellow or red varieties, when just ripe but not mushy, wash and dry with a soft cloth, prick them a few times; place in a stone jar, add four and one-half pounds of sugar to one gallon of vinegar (of medium strength). Put into preserving kettle, boil and skim several times. Continue heating the vinegar and pouring over them every other day for three days.

PICKLED PLUMS No. II.

Take seven pounds of plums and five pounds of brown sugar, one-fourth pound of stick cinnamon; two ounces of cloves and two ounces of allspice; scald just vinegar enough to cover them and pour over the spiced plums four mornings in succession. Pack in glass or stone vessels. CAUTION--Do not put in vessels with metal tops.

BRANDIED PLUMS.

To obtain the best results, the utmost care and delicacy must be observed.

Select fruit that is not quite ripe and wipe carefully with a linen cloth; prick to the center in several places with a wooden or silver needle; throw into boiling water, immediately remove from the fire and let stand for ten minutes. Heat again until the fruit begins to rise to the top. Skim off and drop into ice water. When thoroughly cold drain and place into a glass or stone vessel holding good, strong brandy. Let stand six days. To each gallon of brandy in which the fruit has been soaked add eight ounces of granulated sugar. (More or less as desired.) Take a teaspoonful of ground cinnamon, one of cloves, one of allspice and one of coriander seed. Tie loosely in a muslin bag and drop into the brandy which must be brought to the boiling point. Pour over the plums and seal. The bag of spices should be immersed in the plums. Essences of these spices may be used if preferred.

PLUM JUICE.

Select only well ripened plums for the finest flavored vinegar. Prepare kettle and crush with a wooden pestle. Heat slowly and boil gently for about twenty-five minutes. Crush again; put two thicknesses of cheese cloth into the colander, pour in and let drain; when sufficiently cold, press out all of the juice possible by twisting the cloth. Clean the preserving

kettle and return the juice, return to the fire. When it boils draw back and skim, repeat this three or four times. To every pint of juice add one-half pint of sugar; boil five or six minutes, skimming carefully. Fill hot sterilized jars or bottles. Set the vessel in boiling water and allow it to simmer for twenty-five minutes; re-fill with boiling juice; remove from the fire and seal. Place on boards and set in a dark place out of a draft. This makes a delicious beverage when properly diluted and used the same as grape juice.

PLUM SYRUP.

Make exactly the same as recommended for plum juice except three-fourths as much sugar as juice must be added. This is excellent for water ices, ice cream, etc. Two or three spoonful added to a glass of ice water is very refreshing in hot weather.

PLUM VINEGAR.

Select only well ripened plums for the finest flavored vinegar. Prepare the same as for jelly except the pulp may be washed twice with warm water so as to extract just as much of the juice as possible. Pour into stone or glass vessels and set in a warm place for two days. Skim and decant the clear liquid, and to every three pints of juice add one pint of brown sugar. Pour into jugs; tie a cloth over the top and set in a dark place to work. When sufficiently strong it may be corked and put away for use. A little "mother" from strong vinegar is often added with excellent results.

DRIED PLUMS No. I.

Select medium ripe plums, cover with boiling water, cover the vessel and let stand twenty minutes; drain and spread in the sun to dry. Stir occasionally, when dry examine them frequently and at the first appearance of worms put in the oven and heat for a few minutes. In cooking soak in cold water for a few hours the same as for other dried fruit.

DRIED PLUMS No. II.

After peeling the plums, allow half pound of sugar to one pound of fruit. Put fruit and sugar in layers in a preserving kettle. Heat slowly until the sugar is dissolved, then boil until clear. Spread the fruit on platters in the sun and turn often until quite dry. Pack in layers with sugar in stone or glass jars. Plums dried in this way are extra fine.

PLUMS AS OLIVES.

Take plums when just beginning to ripen, but still green, make a brine out of sea salt, if possible, common rock salt will do, strong enough to hold up an egg. Pour the brine over the fruit hot. Cover and let stand for twenty-four hours. Pour off and make a new brine, in which place the fruit, boil one minute and seal in the hot brine.—*From Wis. Exp. Sta. Bul.* 136.

PLUM SOUP. No I.

Take one-half teacup of rice, soak over night, add two quarts of cold water, boil until thoroughly done and pasty, peel and stew a pint of well ripe plums, pass through a colander to remove the seeds; sweeten to taste,

add to the rice paste, add a little cinnamon, one clove and a dash of nutmeg.

PLUM SOUP NO. 2.

Take one pint of ripe plums and one quart of blackberries, stew each separately, until thoroughly done, rub plums through colander and rub the blackberries through a sieve just fine enough to remove the seed; boil two tablespoons of tapioca thoroughly done in two quarts of water, mix, return to the fire, and simmer twenty-five minutes. Add a little cinnamon, sweeten with sugar to taste, or add a little salt as preferred. Serve cold.

PLUM SOUP NO. 3.

Make exactly as for number two, except a pint of very ripe peaches must be added that have been peeled and reduced to a pulp without cooking. Sweeten to taste and serve, preferably with cream and sugar.

PLUM LOZENGES NO. 1.

Take one-third pint of sugar to each pint of thick plum juice after straining; allow to simmer thirty-five to forty minutes, when at boiling point add two heaping tablespoons of gelatine that has been previously dissolved in a very little cold water, stir well, remove from the fire and continue to stir until it begins to cool and thicken. Pour into well buttered plates or earthen dishes, let dry slowly, sprinkle with sugar during the process, when sufficiently dry cut into any shape desired.

PLUM LOZENGES No. II. (Very Fine.)

Take one pint of sugar, on pint each of thick plum, peach and blackberry juice; simmer and skim for thirty minutes, when at boiling point add three heaping tablespoons of gelatine that has been previously soaked in a little cold water. Treat the same as for No. 1. Until nearly ready to cut, sprinkle and immerse bits of candied plums and peaches; cut each piece to include one or both of these choice tid-bits.

WILD PLUM CATSUP. (Berry's Fruit Recipes.)

To each five pounds of plums take two and one-half pounds of sugar, cooking, crushing, and putting through the sieve. To each quart of juice add a generous half-pint of vinegar and spice to taste. Cook twenty minutes and bottle.

PLUM PASTE.

Select very ripe plums, put into a granite or porcelain lined stew kettle, and add two tablespoons of water, cover tightly and steam very slowly until enough water forms to allow them to cook slowly without burning. Boil until they can be rubbed to a pulp, pass through a sieve to remove the seed, return the pulp to the fire and cook slowly until very thick, add one-half of its weight of brown sugar; let dissolve and boil for a few minutes, pour the mass into earthen plates or dishes, in quarter or inch thicknesses, and dry slowly in a warm oven. Remove when sufficiently dry and pack away, to be used in puddings, candies, cakes, etc.

PLUM ROLL.

Use very ripe plums the same as for the paste. Mash and remove the pits, pour into platters about one-fourth inch thick, add sugar slowly as long as it will absorb any, dry in a moderate oven, remove the thin sheets from the platters, dust with powdered sugar and roll, put in bags or jars for use. It is ready for use after soaking for a few hours in cold water, usually without cooking and without sugar.

PLUM ROLY-POLY.

This can be made with either plum paste, or the plum prepared as for Betty, as follows: make a sweet biscuit dough, roll out thin and spread with a large layer of plums, sprinkle with sugar, butter and spice and roll the dough over as for jelly roll. Steam two hours or bake in a moderate oven.

PLUM DUMPLINGS BAKED.

Remove the seed from the desired number of thoroughly ripe plums. roll out biscuit dough quite thin, cut in squares large enough to cover four or six plums, sprinkle with a tablespoon of sugar, bring up the corners of the dough and fasten by pinching and twisting together. Place in baking pan close together and when pan is full pour over them a syrup made with one pint of water and three-fourths pound of sugar, letting it come half way to the top of the dumplings. Cinnamon, allspice and a dash of nutmeg may be sprinkled over the top of each. Bake fifty minutes in rather a brisk oven. Serve with cream or hard sauce.

PLUM CROQUETTS No. I.

Prepare the plums the same as for the paste, further thicken with fine bread crumbs or cracker dust, minced walnuts, hickory nuts or nuts of any kind add greatly to its flavor; stir in additional sugar if desired, and a dash of spice. Roll in egg, then in crumbs, fry a deep brown in boiling fat.

PLUM BETTY.

Select two or three cups of very ripe plums; remove the seed and mince very fine. Butter a dish, put in a layer of plums, sprinkle with cinnamon, sugar and butter, cover with bread crumbs, alternate the layers of fruit and crumbs as long as desired, stopping with layer of crumbs. Do not add water, but cover tight and steam one hour in a moderate oven, after which remove the cover and brown quickly, serve with cream or sweet sauce.

PLUM DUMPLINGS BOILED.

Prepare the plums the same as for baked dumplings, tie each one in a separate cloth, plunge into boiling water and boil vigorously for one and one-half hours. Serve with cream or hard sauce.

PLUM DUMPLINGS IN CUPS.

Line baking cups with thin pastry; fill with seeded plums and sugar; place on each a cover of the pastry and put them in a large baking pan, pouring boiling water around the cups half way up, bake until done in a hot oven.

DELICIOUS PLUM TART

Seed and place in a crock without any water the desired amount of plums; put in a slow oven and cook until tender, mix half and half with peaches that have been peeled, seeded and treated in the same way. Place in baking dish, sugar to taste, cover with a sheet of well pricked pastry and bake quickly, serve cold with cream, or rich milk.

PLUM SANDWICHES.

Spread thin slices of bread with plum jam or plum paste, sprinkle liberally with chopped hickory nuts, walnuts, chestnuts, etc. If desired very rich spread the bread with butter before putting on the fruit and chopped nuts.

PLUM SHORT-CAKE WITH NUTS. (Very Rich.)

Make a rich pie crust, roll out thin and bake; cut any shape desired and proceed as follows: select very ripe plums, peel, seed and chop very fine, sweeten to taste, spread a thin layer over each piece of pastry, in the same manner as for layer cake, sprinkle each layer liberally with minced nuts. Build up as high as you desire, ice the top and decorate artistically with nut kernels. Serve with cream or very rich milk.

PLUM CROQUETTS No. II.

Take the desired amount of plum paste or plum and peach marmalade; put into a double boiler and let come to the boiling point; have ready about one-third of a cup of corn starch that has been moistened with just a little cold water; stir in and cook fifteen minutes, just before removing add one beaten egg, whipping as it cooks; place all in a flat, wet mould or deep dish and set aside to cool. When needed drop a teaspoon of the mixture into fine dry bread, or craker crumbs, place in basket and fry to a light brown in boiling fat; spices, nuts and lemon juice may be added if desired.

DELICIOUS PLUM SHERBET.

Scald a quart of rich milk, dissolve in a cup of sugar. Let simmer eight minutes, then cool, adding to it (when cold) a pint of plum pulp when sweetened and flavored. When half frozen add the whites of two eggs whipped, and complete the freezing.

PLUM ICE.

Seed and rub to a pulp the desired amount of well ripened plums; for every pint of plums add three-fourths pint of sugar; let stand two hours. Strain, and to each half gallon of syrup allow one and one-half pint of water. Freeze. The pulp will make nice pies, tarts, sauce or croquetts by the addition of a little sugar and flavoring to taste.

PLUM PUDDING.

Over a quart of seeded plums sprinkle one and three-fourths pound of sugar, let stand an hour; drain off the juice, add to it a pint of rich sweet milk, four well beaten eggs, a little more sugar if not sweet enough, a tablespoon of butter, melted and rubbed smooth with half a cup of flour, and a little of the milk; add a pinch of salt, pour over the plums and bake till brown, serve with cream or the fruit syrup that was drained off.

PLUM PUNCH.

Seed and mash a pound of very ripe plums, place in bowl with the juice of three lemons and two oranges, and three slices of pineapples, cover with one and one-half pint of sugar. Let stand one hour and strain. Heat this and add a quart each of carbonated water and Claret, a sliced banana and one-fourth pound of candied plums.

PLUM RICE PUDDING

Allow two tablespoons of rice to one quart of milk salted. Boil together slowly for half an hour. Then place in the baking dish with one cup of seeded and sweetened plums. Bake an hour, stirring frequently. The last time stir in a half cup of mixed nuts, cover with well beaten egg and brown lightly, serve with cream.

OLD-FASHIONED PLUM PIE.

Take very ripe plums, seed and put them in a deep pie-plate lined with a rich puff paste, sprinkle a thick layer of sugar on each layer of plums, add spice if desired, put in a tablespoon of water, and sprinkle a little flour over the top. Cover with thick crust and bake from fifty to sixty minutes.

DRIED PLUM PIE.

Soak the desired amount of dried plums in cold water several hours. Stew until tender, thoroughly mash by rubbing through a colander, beat two eggs, saving the white of one, add three-fourths cup of sugar and one-half cup of butter to every pie, spice to taste, stir in the eggs, line a deep pie-pan with puff paste, fill and bake until done, frost the white of the egg and spread on top, return to a quick oven and brown slightly.

FRIED PLUM PIE.

Take plain biscuit dough, roll out very thin. Put two tablespoons of plum paste or stewed plums that have been spiced and well sweetened. Fold the crust over and cut into small half moons, wet and crimp the edges. Distribute the fruit by pressing the pie gently after crimping. Fry to a rich brown in boiling hot fat.